

State Program Standing Committee

December 18, 2014

Location: Comfort Inn and Suites, Berlin, VT

Meeting commences: 9:35 a.m.

Members present: Ed Place, Bethany Drum, Connie Woodberry, Theresa Wood, Emily Anderson, Anne Bakeman, Barb Prine, Nicole LeBlanc, Max Barrows, Susan Yuan, Linda Berger, Joe Greenwald

Members absent: Julie Cunningham, Greg Mairs, Kyle Moriarty

Guest & Staff: Camille George, Chris O'Neill, Ellen Booth, Bart Mair, Marlys Waller, Cathy Hull, Ron Holm, Ted Earle, Kim McClellan, Kathy Brown, Randy Lizotti, Rich Atkinson, Jennifer Stratton, Dixie McFarland, Commissioner Susan Wehry, Karen Schwartz, Rachael Colby, Joy (Transition II), Janine Parker, Jennifer Gibb

Minutes: Theresa Wood summarized minutes. Nicole LeBlanc motioned to accept, Bethany Drum seconded the motion. All members approved November 2014 SPSC minutes.

Announcements:

- There is a vacancy on the DAIL Advisory Board; anyone interested in applying should contact Lisa Parro in the DAIL Commissioner's Office.
- Documents for the January 2015 SPSC Meeting have been requested in order for member to prepare and be engaged in the discussion.

I. Re-Designation of Northwestern Counseling and Support Services (NCSS)

Ellen Booth, Quality Reviewer for the Developmental Disabilities Services Division, informed SPSC members the NCSS review went smoothly. Ellen summarized that NCSS is meeting the standards for care and only found a few areas needing improvement, further stating that NCSS is committed to making the adjustments to align with standards and enhance services to consumers.

Kathy Brown, Director of Developmental Services at NCSS, stated staff training was an agency priority. NCSS offers both mandatory and elective Developmental Service trainings, as well as, tuition reimbursement for staff. Self Advocates are involved in pre-service training. Peer support offers specific trainings and the Welcoming Committee medical staff conducts first aid and CPR training.

NCSS Advocates have a leadership team that meets once a week, occasionally inviting guest speakers. Randy Lizotti confirmed trainings are conducted and there have been opportunities to participate in ISA and pre-service trainings.

Kathy Brown and Kim McClellan reassured the committee that corrective action has already started to address the minor deficiencies found in section Unified 4.12, Accessibility, in the review. Work has commenced on updating signage and ramp access. A building sink is not currently ADA compliant and research has begun on finding ways to make it compliant. All other issues have been resolved. Ellen Booth reassured the committee that the minor discrepancies found in section 4.12 did not place any consumers in danger or harms way.

Max Barrows, representing Green Mountain Care Advocates (GMSA), offered a qualitative report highlighting feedback from recipients of services from NCSS. Kathy Brown, NCSS, found this report to be very helpful and informative in addressing qualitative issues of care going forward.

In line with improvements for quality of life initiatives, Susan Yuan stated NCSS has taken the initiative to promote Think College, so consumers can experience higher education and build skills that translate into job marketability.

In DS Section 4.7, Comprehensive Service Systems, Camille George, DDS Director, thanked Kathy Brown for her diligence in overcoming many transitions and stated it had been key in stabilizing and planning comprehensive services.

In the area of Consumer Support and Treatment Records, DS 4.9, minor deficiencies were seen. The deficiencies lie in the manner in which data is collected. Currently, NCSS uses an Electronic Medical Record (EMR). The data conforms to more clinical information, but doesn't translate easily into data needed support DDS requirements. Kathy Brown stated NCSS employs Lavender and Wyatt to manage the EMR Software. SSA's are trying to standardize systems for continuity and to allow the data software to house information fields pertinent for generating reports for all obliged organizations. Kathy further explained one of the many barriers is the cost to update and change the software. The current EMR is in real time. It is geared toward documenting clinical information and less adept at capturing case management information necessary for generating report to the division. A committee has been established to examine ways to manage the data and marry practical application for promoting staff efficiency.

There is frustration around the fact that these customizations are copyrighted by Lavender and Wyatt, but the research and development is paid for by the agency.

SPSC members were divided in their opinions about whether the State of Vermont should set standardized data collection uniformity. However, it was noted that generally the State does not do this, but instead will provide specific guidance about the capacity and components the product must have. SPSC members did state that it was unfortunate and an apparent inefficient use of financial and human resources to have the DA's and the SSA's using multiple different electronic health record systems.

A SPSC member voiced concerns that there was no correlation between the State System of Care Plan and the Re-designation.

Another member suggested on working with Camille George to redefine and examine the relationship between the two. It would help the SPSC to be able to provide more feedback.

Vote: 5 for Re-designation and 5 for Re-designation with minor,

II. One Time Funding Report and Budget Update – Discussion with Commissioner Susan Wehry

Commissioner Wehry stated the FY16 budget was a work in progress. The press is accurate in painting a picture of a challenging year. Currently, there is a \$100,000,000 million dollar projected shortfall for FY16.

Many serious and difficult conversations have taken place concerning the budget funding issues. Revenue has projected growth of 3%; however spending is projected to increase by 5%. Efforts are being made to align projected budget growth with spending increases to create a balanced budget. Governor Shumlin is working toward a budget with a stable trajectory into the future. Human Services continues to advocate for the most vulnerable populations. Commissioner Wehry indicated that the administration is not saying ‘do more with less,’ but acknowledging that the State will have to do ‘less.’ It is expected that this will be a tough budget year.

State Fiscal committees have been actively meeting with committee chairs and AHS Leadership in hopes of making well informed decisions.

The budgets will be about setting priorities in FY16. The goal is balance for the future, employing a strategy to think beyond the present to the future. DAIL is actively communicating with the AHS Secretary. Any further proposed changes to the SFY 15 (current year) budget will be presented in the Budget Adjustment Act and will go through the legislative review process. The Governor is tentatively scheduled to release the proposed budget to the legislature on January 15th; however, this is not confirmed and is subject to change.

III. Election of SPSC Officers

Theresa Wood brought to the committee’s attention that election of SPSC officers is overdue. Ed Place and Theresa Wood have been co-chairs for many years. Committee members have been asked to consider nominating or running for a chair position. Page 3 of the Operating Procedure states:

Co-Chairpersons – There are two co-chairs. At least one of the co-chairs is a Recipient or an Advocate. The co-chairs are elected by the Committee in October and serve for two (2) years. Co-chairs may be re-elected by the Committee for one (1) additional term making their total term in office a maximum of four (4) years. The election of co-chairs is staggered so that the terms do not end at the same time.

Responsibilities of Co-Chairpersons – The co-chairs have some specific responsibilities. These are:

- Being in charge of the meeting. This includes making sure the schedule is followed, helping everyone have a chance to speak, encouraging everyone to listen to one another, and beginning and ending on time.

- Assisting the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living with making the agenda for each meeting.
- Acting as the spokespeople for the Committee.
- Making sure the Committee gets all the work done it needs to for the year.
- Helping people understand their roles as Committee members and helping people understand the *Executive Code of Ethics*.
- Helping each member to understand his or her responsibilities, including attendance at meetings.
- The Co-Chairs may assign duties to other members of the Committee.

Theresa asked members to consider chairing the meeting. Elections will be held at the next meeting, January 15th, 2015.

IV. Long-term Disability Services and Supports

Committee member, Barb Prine, updated the committee on long-term disability services and supports. This is not to be confused with single payer reform. Legal Aid was a part of the accountable care conversation with hopes of reducing the cost and sharing the savings. Specifically, giving input about how savings will be shared and what promises were made.

The results include;

- 72% of Medicaid costs of people who receive long term care services. If people initially qualified, sufficient case management would stabilize.
- For elders and people with health concerns, there is a case management capacity tied to the Choices for Care program.
- Providers understood there isn't enough funding for case management in some areas. It's hard to stop the bounce back to the medical home. The Committee decided to write the Governor a letter expressing the need for universal support.
- Concerns were raised about the committee's role to advocate. State workers, who were operating in a dual role (both advocate and state employees), did not sign the letter. Individuals took it upon themselves to send the letter, as well as did 15 other agencies.
- Healthcare reform and savings will need to examine the components of case management.
- Examining the promises and commitments along with document language was a positive process.
- Medical professionals will need training and education about disability and long-term services and support.
- Bottom line – It takes more money to administer case management. Case managers are often told not to support the medical side of the house.

Barb Prine offered to send members copies of the letter upon request.

V. Operating Procedure Review

The Committee is comprised of 5 Recipients, 5 Advocates, and 5 Professionals. Family members can serve in any capacity. Page one of the SPSC Operating procedures states, “[P]eople with developmental disabilities or family members can be nominated to serve in any of the 3 categories. The maximum number of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members across all three categories is eight (8). The maximum number of professionals and advocates who are not individuals with developmental disabilities or family members is seven (7).”

A motion was made to amend the word maximum to minimum pertaining to the number of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members.

The committee discussed the definition of Professional, Advocate, and Recipient. Some members wanted more clarity and role definition, others like the flexibility. One member offered definitions are best served in an informal conversation around nominations of members.

The committee examined the terminology around SPSC representation. A member wondered why the State Program Standing Committee was not categorized as a Board. It was explained that the statutory language refers to it as an advisory committee, but to be consistent with other terminology in the Designation Regulations, it was changed to State Program Standing Committee.

The SPSC Operating Procedures states on page one, “Meetings are usually held in Waterbury and are open to the public.” It was proposed that the location be changed to read ‘Central Vermont’ due to the uncertainty after the Waterbury dislocation.

A member suggested we add bullets around the selection process, to clarify the process. In addition, the committee was asked to evaluate the method of advertising openings to align with the technological age. The committee agreed to delete advertising committee vacancies in newspapers.

Camille George will make agreed upon changes and suggest further changes to the Operating Procedures for review at a future (Spring 2015) meeting.

VI. Update on DS Annual Report

Camille George updated the committee concerning the DS Annual Report. Last year legislators passed specific directives requiring certain information to be included in the Annual Report. Camille cautioned the format and content will be different to coincide with legislative requirements.

A member voiced concern about the potential lack of data needed for advocacy that was obtained in the report in years past.

Camille stated that as a first priority DDS is working hard to reformat the Annual Report to meet legislative requirements and complimented June Bascom for all of her hard work in making this report happen DDS will welcome constructive feedback about possible changes/enhancements to future annual reports.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:35 p.m.